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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 7, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 7, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. ERDOGAN AK PARTY'S FIRST-LISTED CANDIDATE IN SIIRT

(Tercuman/Dunya/Cumhuriyet/Turkiye) AK Party informed the Higher Election Council (YSK) that its first-listed candidate in the March 9 Siirt elections will be AK Party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Necati Cetinkaya of the AK Party submitted documents regarding Erdogan's candidacy to YSK on February 6. Mervan Gul, AK Party's first-listed candidate from Siirt in the November 3 Parliamentary elections, had withdrawn from the March 9 elections for Erdogan.

3. TURKEY'S MISSILE SHIELD INSUFFICIENT

(Tercuman) Turkish Military Electronics Industry (ASELSAN) Secretary General (ret.) Colonel Serdar Erdurmaz, in his book entitled "Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, Weapons Control, and Turkey," has written that Turkey's defenses against nuclear, biological, and chemical warhead attacks are inadequate. However, Erdurmaz pointed to two trump cards Turkey has: its air force and the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems in eastern and southeastern Turkey, under the U.S. National Missile Defense System.

4. ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS

(Evrensel) A cockfight was held in Elazig to highlight protest against a possible U.S. attack against Iraq. Two roosters named "Saddam" and "Bush" were made to fight, which ended with the victory of "Saddam." Also, a group of youths issued an anti-war press release in front of Elazig's Post Office. Regarding a possible U.S.-led war in Iraq, they said that remaining silent in such a situation meant being involved in the massacre of thousands of people in Iraq. In addition, the Tunceli Anti-War Platform decided to stage new anti-war demonstrations on February

5. Under the new decision, the Platform will form "a peace chain against war" in the provincial capital on Saturday. The Platform will also ask local merchants to close their places of business for an hour.

5. BOMB HOAX ON DIYARBAKIR PLANE

(Cumhuriyet/Turkiye/Diyarbakir) A telephone call that there was a bomb on Turkish Airlines' (THY) mid-February 6 Diyarbakir-Ankara plane caused panic. Shortly after take-off, the plane returned to the airport and the passengers were evacuated under intense security measures. Bomb experts searched the plane, but could not find anything suspicious. The plane took off again an hour later, with its 99 passengers and crew. Former State of Emergency (OHAL) Gokhan Aydinler, who has been appointed the new Security Director General, and former Diyarbakir Governor Cemil Serhadli, were also on the plane.

6. CONTINUED PRO-OCALAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE SOUTHEAST

(Evrensel) Hunger strikes launched in protest of the isolation of jailed KADEK/PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan continue in the Southeastern provinces of Batman, Hakkari, Van, and Gaziantep. Illegal pro-Ocalan demonstrations were also held in those provinces. In Adana, ten women arrested for

staging a pro-Ocalan sit-down demonstration in front of the Adana chapter of the AK Party were released. In addition, the HADEP Mayor of Adana's Kucukdikili district, Mehmet Yasik, called for support from all sectors so Turkey's internal peace is not disrupted. Yasik claimed Ocalan's isolation and a possible U.S. attack against Iraq were related.

17. DIVORCED WOMAN KILLED FOR "WALKING AROUND WITH MEN"

(Sabah) In Diyarbakir, two brothers strangled their 19-year-old sister, Gulseren T. on January 27, 2002, due to rumors that she was meeting with men. Gulseren had gotten divorced two years ago. After killing Gulseren, they melted nylon on her face in an attempt to make her body unidentifiable and threw the body near a local school. The next day, teachers and students found the body and informed the police, who interrogated Gulseren's parents, who revealed that Gulseren's two brothers had murdered her.

18. PULUMUR EARTHQUAKE

(Evrensel) A delegation of professors from Elazig's Firat University Geology Department prepared a report regarding the January 27 earthquake in Tunceli's Pulumur district. The report attributed most damage to the district's public buildings to their construction on a slope on an active fault line and their being multi-storey structures.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

19. SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY FOCUSED ON DEVELOPMENT

(Dunya/Radikal/Evrensel) The Turkish Garment Industrialists Association (TGSD) and the Southeastern Anatolia Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (GUNSIAD) jointly organized a meeting entitled "Effects of A Possible War on the Turkish and Regional Economy" in Diyarbakir. Participants focused on ways of getting out of a possible war with the least loss. Industrialists called for a regional development plan. TGSD President Umut Oran pointed to the vital significance of qualified industrial zones under the law number 4325, which he wanted implemented as soon as possible.

110. NEW CLA SIGNED IN MALATYA MUNICIPALITY

(Evrensel) The Malatya Municipality has signed a new collective labor agreement (CLA) covering its 500 employees. CLA foresees a 15% increase in the employees' salaries within the first six months and a 10% increase within the second six months. In addition, Adana's Agricultural Complex (Cukobirlik) has paid its workers a total of TL 1.5 trillion (approx. USD 900,000) under a recent CLA signed between Cukobirlik and a labor union.

111. COURT REVERSES WATER PRICE HIKE

(Hurriyet) The Adana Metropolitan Municipality's Water and Sewage Administration (ASKI) "secretly" increased the price of its drinking water, as well as wastewater discharged from homes and places of business, by 360% in 2002. Three Municipal Council members petitioned the Adana Administrative Court to reverse the price hike. The court reached a verdict reversing the price hike. Also, the Council of State upheld the verdict. Now, ASKI is expected to repay the amount collected unjustly.

HOLTZ